

The Matter of the Termination of Co-operative Relations Between the
Japanese Empire and Various Organs of the League of Nations.

2 Nov 38

Minutes of the Meeting

The Minutes of the Privy Council.

1. The matter of the termination of co-operative relations
between the Japanese Empire and various organs of the League of Nations.

2 Nov 38

(Wednesday) Meeting opened at 1008 hours, in the presence of His Majesty the
Emperor.

Members present:

President HIRANUMA (平沼).

Vice-President HARA (原).

Ministers of State:

Prime Minister KONOYE (近衛) No. 5.

Minister of the Navy YONAI (米内) No. 6.

Minister of Justice SHIOHO (鹽野) No. 7.

Minister of Education ARAKI (荒木) No. 8.

Minister of Communications NAGAI (永井) No. 9.

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry ARIMA (有馬) No. 10.

Minister of Railways NAKAJIMA (中島) No. 11.

Minister of Welfare KIDO (木戸) No. 12.

Minister of Home Affairs SUETSUGU (末次) No. 13.

Minister of War ITAGAKI (板垣) No. 15.

Minister of Overseas Affairs HATTA (八田) No. 16.

Minister of Foreign Affairs ARITA (有田) No. 17.

Privy Councilors:

Privy Councilor KANEKO (金子) No. 19.

Privy Councilor SAKURAI (櫻井) No. 21.

Privy Councilor KAWAI (河合) No. 22.

Privy Councilor ISHII (石井) No. 24.

Privy Councilor ARIMA (有馬) No. 25.

Privy Councilor KUBOTA (窪田) No. 26.

Privy Councilor SUZUKI, Soroku (鈴木莊六) No. 27.

Privy Councilor ISHIZUKA (石塚) No. 28.

Privy Councilor SHIMIZU (清水) No. 29.

Privy Councillor FUJISAWA (藤 澤) No. 30.
Privy Councillor HAYASHI (林) No. 31.
Privy Councillor MINAMI (南) No. 32.
Privy Councillor TANAKA (田 中) No. 33.
Privy Councillor NARA (奈 良) No. 34.
Privy Councillor ARAKI (荒 木) No. 35.
Privy Councillor MATSUI (松 井) No. 36.
Privy Councillor SUGAWARA (菅 原) No. 37.
Privy Councillor MATSUURA (松 浦) No. 38.

Absentees:

Imperial Princes:

Prince YASUHITO (雍 仁) No. 1.
Prince NOBUHITO (宣 仁) No. 2.
Prince TAKAHITO (崇 仁) No. 3.
Prince KOTOHITO (赧 仁) No. 4.

Ministers of State:

Minister of Finance, Minister of Commerce and Industry
IKEDA (池 田) No. 14.

Privy Councillors:

Privy Councillor KURODA (黒 田) No. 20.
Privy Councillor SUZUKI, Kantaro (鈴木 貫太郎) No. 23.

Committees:

The Director of the Bureau of Legislation FUNADA (船 田).
The Councilor of the Bureau of Legislation MORIYAMA (森 山).
Director of the Bureau of Treaties, of the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs MITANI (三 谷).
Vice-Minister of Public Welfare HIROSE (廣 瀬).
Director of the Board of Health, Ministry of Public
Welfare HAYASHI (林).
Director of the Board of Labor, Ministry of Public
Welfare MARITA (成 田).

Reporter:

Director of the Investigation Committee HARA (原).

Chief Secretary:

Chief Secretary MURAKAMI (村 上).

Secretaries:

Secretary HORIE (堀 江).

Secretary TAKATSUJI (高辻).

The President (HIRANUMA) announced the opening of the meeting.

The subject of discussion was to be: The Matter of the Termination of Co-operative Relations Between the Japanese Empire and Various Organs of the League of Nations.

Dispensing with the recitation of the first reading pertaining to the topic for discussion, an immediate request was made for the report of the Director of the Investigation Committee.

Reporter HARA:

In conjunction with the matter of the termination of co-operative relations between the Japanese Empire and various organs of the League of Nations which has been recently referred to the Privy Council for consultation, the establishment of an investigation committee has been ordered. In a committee meeting which was opened on 27 October, after hearing the expositions given by the Minister of State and various officials concerned, the committee continued its deliberations.

The Japanese Empire had already notified the League of Nations of its withdrawal in March, 1933. Although two years passed before the withdrawal of the Japanese Empire from the League of Nations was formally recognized, the Japanese Government has, since then, willingly continued to co-operate in the various peaceful and humane undertakings of the League in compliance with the aims of the Imperial Rescript which was promulgated at the time of the withdrawal notice.

At the present time, government representatives, or individuals in a private capacity, are participating in the League's Permanent Mandates Commission, Advisory Commission on Traffic in Opium, Central Opium Commission, Advisory Commission on Social Problems, Joint Commission on Arts and Sciences, Economic Commission, Health Commission, and Oriental Epidemic Information Bureau. They were also affiliated with the International Labor Office and participated in the organization of the International Court of Justice. They also participated in the General Disarmament Conference and in the World Economic Conference which are both sponsored by the League of Nations.

However, with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese Incident, CHINA presented a formal appeal to the League of Nations on 12 Sep 37. Since then, the Assembly and the Council of the League, influenced by CHINA's activities, resolved that the actions of the Japanese Empire against CHINA are direct violations of the Nine Power Treaty concerning CHINA and the Anti-War Pact.

Not only has the League promised moral support to CHINA, but she has also encouraged every nation in the League to give individual assistance to CHINA. Furthermore, it has been charged that the Japanese forces bombed defenseless cities and utilized poison gas. The League adopted various resolutions which were intended to censure the Japanese Empire. However, the effect of these resolutions on the Japanese Empire was insignificant because of the indifferent attitude of the various countries and the impotency of the League itself. As a result, CHINA took full advantage of the full session of the Assembly of the League and intensified the anti-Japanese and help-CHINA sentiment. Employing the League's power of collective pressure, CHINA tried her utmost to restrain the Japanese Empire.

Finally, in compliance with CHINA's request, the council made the stipulations of the 17th Article of the Covenant, applicable to the Sino-Japanese Incident; specifically, for the settlement of disputes, nations which are non-members of the League will bear the same responsibilities as nations which are members of the League. In accordance with Paragraph One of the same article, an invitation was received by the Japanese Empire. On 30 Sep 38, after the Japanese Government, in conformity with its policy, refused the invitation, the Council, in accordance with Paragraph Three of the same article,

adopted a resolution whereby each member of the League would be able to adopt sanctions against the Japanese Empire individually as provided in the 16th Article of the League Covenant. The decision of the Council entrusts the exercise of sanctions to the various nations. There are several countries such as POLAND, BELGIUM, and PERU which have notified the Japanese Empire that they have no intention whatsoever of executing sanctions against it at the present time. Although it is not expected that the actual application of these sanctions will take place, as long as the decision of the Council stands as it is, the Japanese Empire and the League of Nations will be in complete opposition to each other. Consequently, from the standpoint of national honor, the further co-operation of the Japanese Empire with the various organs of the League of Nations cannot be tolerated. Because the Empire will suffer the contempt of all the nations of the world, a plan for the settlement of this matter of the termination of co-operative relations between the Japanese Empire and the various organs of the League, after our withdrawal from the League, has been drawn up and is the subject for discussion in this session.

When the Imperial sanction is obtained, the Director of the Board of General Affairs of the International Council will notify the Secretary-General of the League of Nations of this resolve. Of those persons participating in the functions of the various organs of the League, the posts of those with a government representative status will be terminated, and those in a private capacity will resign of their own free will. Payments to the League of JAPAN's share of the expenses for the various League organs will be discontinued hereafter. Those who have held positions as League personnel will be allowed to act on their own volition.

Insofar as the mandatory rule of the SOUTH SEAS ISLANDS by the Japanese Empire is concerned; regardless of any influence the withdrawal of the Empire from the League may have, we will always continue this mandatory rule in accordance with the 22nd Article of the League Covenant and the Mandatory Rule Article. The measures we have adopted in this matter do not have any relationship to this mandatory rule status. Consequently, in accordance with Paragraph Seven, Article 22 of the League Covenant, the annual report to the League Council will be made as usual. Hereafter, government representatives will not attend the sessions of the Permanent Mandates Commission which is an organ of the League. The participation of Japanese committees in this Assembly is also to be discontinued.

After having taken such actions on this matter, the Imperial Government will discontinue its participation in international enterprises which are carried out through the League of Nations. In compliance with the Imperial Edict which has already been promulgated, we will co-operate in the various plans for world peace. There will be no deviations in our policy of participating in international enterprises which have as their object the public peace and well-being of mankind. For this reason, the Ministers of State have made it clear to us that we must not be negligent in taking appropriate steps towards this aim through diplomatic channels other than those of the League of Nations.

The point is that the Council of the League of Nations has permitted the sanctions against the Japanese Empire under Article 16 of the League Covenant based on CHINA's request and therefore, co-operative relations between the Empire and various League organs which have existed even after our withdrawal from the League, will now be terminated. In spite of the fact that the Japanese Empire withdrew from the League of Nations for the purpose of contributing towards world peace, it is very regrettable that it has become necessary at this time to sever co-operative relations with the various League organs. However, we believe that there is no alternative, considering the conflict in its relationship to the League and to the Japanese Empire. His Majesty's wishes, which were set forth in the Imperial Rescript promulgated at the time the Japanese Empire withdrew from the League, will not change with every change in the international political situation. Government authorities will always abide by this, His Majesty's wishes, and give careful consideration to carrying out measures concerning this matter. Naturally, we will still endeavor to co-operate in various peaceful and humane international undertakings through diplomatic channels other than those of the League of Nations.

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1793 Having put our faith in the statements of the government officials and expecting their assiduous efforts in this matter, the Investigation Committee has unanimously passed the resolution.

The foregoing is the report of the Investigation Committee.

President of the Council HIRANUMA:

If there is nothing further to discuss, we will omit the second and subsequent readings, and take a vote immediately. All those in favor of this bill will please rise. (All members rise.)

Council President HIRANUMA:

It has been passed unanimously. The meeting is adjourned for today.

The Emperor withdraws.

Meeting adjourned 1020 hours.

(Signed) Council President Baron HIRANUMA, Kiichiro
(平沼騏一郎).

(Signed) Chief Secretary MURAKAMI, Kyoichi (村上恭一).

Secretaries:

(Signed) HORIE, Suet (堀江季雄).

(Signed) TAKATSUJI, Masami (高辻正己).